

**The Address by Alica Sigmund Heráková,  
Civic Member of the Inter-Ministerial Commission for Roma Community Affairs,  
On the Day of Holocaust Remembrance and Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity  
Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic,  
January 27, 2023**

Dear survivors, Mr. President, senators, distinguished guests,

It is a great honor for me to address you today and to represent the Roma community on the occasion of the Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Day of Prevention of Crimes Against Humanity.

On this day each year we commemorate the needless and horrific suffering and death of millions of people - including Romani people - in the Nazi concentration camps. There are no words that can diminish the atrocious truth. Words that can deny that those atrocities really happened. Even at this moment, elsewhere in the world, people are imprisoned in inhumane conditions because of their ethnicity, for their beliefs, for who they are.

I would like to dedicate my remembrance today not only to the victims of the Holocaust, but also to their descendants. The mechanisms of how trauma is inherited, how it is transmitted through generations, have already been described on numerous occasions. We understand what this means. The question of how to overcome such great pain is always present with us. Should we actually seek to overcome that pain?

I know a man who would answer that question with a resounding “No, we can't”. It was one of the descendants of the survivors, Mr Čeněk Růžička, the long-time chair of the Committee for the Reparation of the Romani Holocaust, who died at the end of last year. I must not forget to mention his name today, and I am sure I am not the only one who is now dedicating thoughts to him. Mr Čeněk Růžička represented the first generation of descendants of Holocaust survivors. He became the voice of a society-wide conscience. That is why this voice was insistent and uncompromising - as conscience itself.

The future unfolds slowly but surely, and the role models for the Romani community that have been the safeguards of our lives are not there anymore. We must seek new words, our own ways and make our own contributions to the wall of knowledge, our common memory, and our future.

It is not easy, but we know one thing for sure - the past is easier to cope with than is the present, even though it is traumatic.

Violence motivated by hate is an ever-present phenomenon. Therefore, I would like to thank today to all the personalities in public life, but also to all the - lesser-known - individuals who are not afraid to condemn and reject hate violence and respond to manifestations of racism and xenophobia. The experience of the Romani community as a whole remains often traumatic.

Society is an organism, whether we want it or not - we are all interconnected. The individual cannot be responsible for the whole, but he or she is responsible for himself or herself. We should seek courage in our daily lives, courage to stand up for the weaker and often also to stand up for ourselves.

“Na bisteraha”. We shall never forget.